

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Minutes of April 14, 2015**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois (absent), Kenneth W. Goslant, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Arlington Supplee (Board of Listers), Joe Hatch (Scoutmaster, Boy Scout Troup 759), Herb Carlton III (Boy Scout Troup 759), R.J. Gray (Boy Scout Troup 759), Clarke Haywood (Boy Scout Troup 759), Ethan Hatch (Boy Scout Troup 759), Nathan R. Ranker (Boy Scout Troup 759), Charles Morse (Northfield Farmers Market), Chandra Blackmer (Northfield Farmers Market), John Kiernan (Phelps Engineering), and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** There were no changes to the posted agenda.
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. **Joe Hatch, Boy Scout Troup 759 Scoutmaster et al.: Presentation of Scout-Built Bat Boxes.** Mr. Hatch stated that as a community service project, members of his troop (some of whom are present tonight) built bat boxes for nesting bat families this spring. With the rapid spread of White-Nose Syndrome (WNS) across North America, it is estimated that Vermont's little brown bat population has declined by ninety percent (90%). Since these bats are exclusively insectivores, their declining numbers have resulted in an exponential increase in the moth, mosquito, gnat, and midge populations. By placing bat boxes in appropriate locations (i.e., near a natural water source, a sunny location at least twelve feet above ground, etc.) nesting families are provided protection from their own natural predators (rats, snakes, owls, fishers, etc.). The Scouts are presenting the Town with three (3) bat boxes tonight. An additional bat box is nearly complete and will be delivered to the Town at a later time. The Select Board members were grateful for the community spirit amply demonstrated tonight by Boy Scout Troop 759 and also appreciated the hard work devoted to this project.
- b. **Arlington Supplee, Board of Listers: Town-Wide Reappraisal Update.** Mr. Supplee stated that the reappraisal is largely complete. He and his assistant Charlene Lathrop will be making one final review of the numbers for accuracy and consistency this week before delivering the final version of the booklet information to the printer (L. Brown & Sons, Barre, VT) this coming Friday (04/17/15). The completed booklets directly mailed to Northfield property owners from the printer one week later. 1650 booklets will be printed and 1617 copies will be mailed out. The extras will be retained in the Lister Office. Mr. Supplee also has reserved the Community Room for an informational meeting regarding the town-wide reappraisal on Thursday, April 30, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. This meeting will be for general questions about the reappraisal process and not about why specific parcels were valued the way they were. He has reserved the Community Room during the days of May 11-13, 2015 so that residents may direct parcel-specific questions to the Listers and the hired appraisers. Mr. Supplee plans to lodge the Grand List Abstract and send out the official Change of Assessment Notices in mid-June 2015. Residents then would be able to file grievances and hearings would be held before the end of June. Mr. Supplee believes that the reappraisal conducted this time has been as fair and equitable as possible and a vast improvement over the last one a decade ago. He believes that the Listers and/or appraisers have been inside over ninety percent (90%) of Northfield structures. The objective is to get Northfield's common level of appraisal (CLA) as close to one hundred percent (100%) as possible. Manager Schulz asked if the booklets will show the current appraisal values as well as the new ones. Mr. Supplee confirmed that they would. Chair Quinn and the other Board members than thanked Mr. Supplee for overseeing this very difficult process.
- c. **Charles Morse, Northfield Farmers Market: Request to Hold Summer Market on Common.** Mr. Morse is making the market's annual request to conduct its business on the Northfield Common on Tuesday afternoons from mid-May through mid-October. Mr. Morse thanked the Select Board for their past support for the Farmers Market and reported that the vendors had over \$32,000 in sales last year during the outdoor and indoor markets. The plan is to hold the first outdoor market on May 12, 2015 and the final one on October 13, 2015.

Mr. Morse noted that as the number of vendors continues to rise, there may be the need to expand its operations to include the grassy areas near the Northfield Fire Station. The first weeks of the outdoor market were held there last year while the Common Rehabilitation Project was being completed and it worked out very well. However, any possible market expansion is only speculative at this time. Mr. Morse added that the market sells seeds to local youth in order to encourage them to grow vegetables and other crops that can be donated to CERV, etc. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve the request to allow the Northfield Farmers Market to use the Common on Tuesday afternoons (3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.) from May 12, 2015 through October 13, 2015. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. **March 24, 2015 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **April 2, 2015 (Special Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**VI. APPROVAL OF BILLS**

- a. **Warrant #20-15.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to approve Warrant #20-15 in the amount of \$683,074.55. Selectman Goslant noted another expense for the Fairground Road Bridge Replacement Project and asked if FEMA would be reimbursing Northfield for it. Manager Schulz stated that FEMA will be reimbursing ninety percent (90%) of the cost. Selectman Goslant asked why the cost of janitorial services for the Municipal Building has gone up significantly in the past year. Manager Schulz explained that when the former janitor retired, a local cleaning company was hired to fill the void on an interim basis. He now is developing an RFP to see if the Town can get a better deal. Selectman Goslant saw that the Police Department has purchased more communications equipment, i.e., repeaters, mobile data terminals, etc. Manager Schulz stated that the equipment was purchased using Homeland Security grant funds with no local match required. The equipment will be shared with the Highway Department when the current radio system is upgraded. Selectman Goslant asked about a payment to Green Mountain Power (GMP) for work done on Kent Street. Manager Schulz said that this was for system upgrades done last summer but was billed only recently. He added that after some negotiation, the cost to Northfield was reduced by \$5000. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through March 29, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$82,634.21. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**VII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION**

- a. **Liquor License Renewal Application: Northfield Country Club.** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

**VIII. SELECT BOARD**

- a. **Authorization for State Revolving Loan Fund Application (Water Projects).** Manager Schulz stated that the Town has an application to the State of Vermont to obtain \$1,900,000 in revolving loan funds for the Central Street and King Street water projects. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to authorize the application and sign the document. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- b. **King Street Water Project Construction Phase Bid Award.** John Kiernan (Phelps Engineering) stated that bids for this phase of the project were opened on Thursday, April 2, 2015. Nine (9) bids were received and the amounts ranged from \$667,500 to \$1,107,513. The apparent low bidder is J. Hutchins, Inc. (Richmond, VT) and the amount is less than the engineers had estimated (\$718,000) for the lowest bid. If awarded the bid, J. Hutchins would like to delay construction until late summer after the Municipal Pool (located at the end of King Street) has closed for the season. Mr. Kiernan's recommendation is that the Select Board should authorize Manager Schulz to sign a letter of intent to award the project to J. Hutchins pending state approval. Selectman Goslant hopes that it will be possible to hook up the waterlines for Memorial Park and the Municipal Pool to the new King Street water mains. Manager Schulz stated that Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi will oversee this part of the project and these hookups will be handled by a separate contractor.

Chair Quinn asked how long the construction phase would take. Mr. Kiernan believes that one hundred and twenty (120) days is the target. A schedule has not yet been submitted but will be before the contract is signed. Manager Schulz stated that as soon as the contract is signed and schedule set, King Street residents will be contacted and informed. Selectman Doney asked if Mr. Kiernan was confident that J. Hutchins would be able to complete the project for the price bid. Mr. Kiernan stated that he reviewed the project cost breakdown that J. Hutchins submitted with its bid and it seemed appropriate. Selectman Maxwell asked how far the new water mains will extend. Mr. Kiernan said that they would end at the parking lot for Memorial Park. As indicated above, the Town then will connect the new mains to the recreation fields and the swimming pool. Selectman Doney asked if Phelps Engineering would have someone on site during the construction phase. Mr. Kiernan stated that there will be two (2) Phelps Engineering employees on site for both the Central Street and the King Street water projects. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to award the bid for the construction phase of the King Street Water Main Replacement Project to J. Hutchins for \$667,500 and authorize Manager Schulz to proceed with this matter. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

- c. **DRAFT Request for Proposals for Operation of Northfield Transfer Station.** Since the current contract with Earth Waste Systems to operate the Transfer Station expires on June 30, 2015, Manager Schulz has drafted an RFP that will be advertised. The terms of the proposal reflect the current arrangement with Earth Waste Systems with the operator collecting all the fees. Selectman Goslant noted that with the new recycling laws coming into effect, composting will become a bigger factor in coming years; will this be reflected in the new contract with the successful bidder? Manager Schulz said that it would.
- d. **Agreement to Join Mountain Alliance (formerly Tri-Town Alliance).** Manager Schulz stated that he and Chair Quinn have been meeting with representatives from the Alliance about Northfield becoming a member when it leaves the Mad River Resource Management Alliance (MRRMA) later this year. The feedback has been positive and a municipal agreement has been drafted. Manager Schulz would like the Select Board to review the document at this time. One of his own concerns is that Northfield would be responsible for paying part of the Alliance's administrative costs. However, even with this cost, Northfield would pay about \$11,000 to \$14,000 in annual fees to the Alliance as compared to at least \$22,000 to remain in the MRRMA. In addition, Northfield would have to bear the cost of holding a hazardous household waste collection at the Northfield Transfer Station. Chair Quinn noted that the cost of holding the event would depend on how much household waste residents drop off. This should decrease over the years as residents eliminate backlogs of hazardous household waste. Selectman Goslant complimented Chair Quinn and Manager Schulz for their work on this matter, including encouraging local voters to authorize the change in solid waste management districts. Manager Schulz added that the State of Vermont is aware of Northfield's plans to switch from MRRMA to the Alliance and has sent a written reminder that it needs to have a municipal solid waste implementation plan in place. Manager Schulz has checked and it has been confirmed that when Northfield joins the Alliance it would be covered by the Alliance's current plan.
- e. **Reappointment of Health Officer and Deputy Health Officer.** Manager Schulz has been informed by the Vermont Department of Health that the three (3) year terms of Health Officer Mark Podgwaite and Deputy Health Officer Lawton Rutter will expire at the end of this month. Both have expressed interest in continuing and since both have done outstanding work, Manager Schulz recommends their reappointment. Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to reappoint Mark Podgwaite as the Health Officer and Lawton Rutter as Deputy Health Officer for an additional three years. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**
- f. **Appointment of Grand Juror.** Since no one ran for Grand Juror on Town Meeting Day, the Town advertised for letter of interests from Northfield residents who would like to serve in the position. Letters were submitted by two (2) qualified applicants: Richard Wobby and Chris Bradley. Chair Quinn suggested that since Mr. Bradley already provides the Town with many hours of service as an elected Lister, it might be a good idea to appoint Mr. Wobby to this position and provide him with an opportunity for municipal service. Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to appoint Richard Wobby to the vacant position of Grand Juror. **Motion passed 4-0-0.** It then was noted that most (if not all) of the responsibilities originally assigned to Grand Jurors in Vermont have been assumed by other agencies (Vermont State Police, etc.) over the years. Because of this, Chair Quinn felt the Select Board might consider putting articles on the next Annual Town Meeting Warning in order to eliminate this and other municipal positions (elected or appointed) that no longer have real purpose.

**IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS**

- a. **Zoning Administrator Resignation.** Given the exceptional work she has done for the Town, Chair Quinn was sad to see that Zoning Administrator Michele Braun has submitted a letter of resignation. The position will be advertised and Ms. Braun has committed to stay on the job until a replacement has been found.
- b. **Northfield Highway Operations.** Chair Quinn asked how the department's supply of gravel is holding up. Manager Schulz stated that the backroads are in better condition than had been expected given this past winter. About \$14,000 has been spent on road gravel. He added that about sixty-three percent (63%) of the Highway Department's FY 2014-2015 budget has been spent to date. This compares favorably with some other municipal departments that have already expended about three-quarters of their annual budget. Selectman Goslant would like a Highway Committee meeting scheduled for the near future. Chair Quinn has no objection provided that an agenda is generated beforehand so that there is focus on important topics.
- c. **Trailer Removal from Town Property.** Selectman Goslant noted that an old trailer remains on a Union Street property that the Town purchased through the FEMA buyout process; when can it be removed? Manager Schulz said he discussed this with Ms. Braun and they are exploring options.
- d. **Fairground Road Bridge Replacement Project.** Selectman Goslant asked when the project would start up again after its winter shutdown. Manager Schulz thought that work probably will recommence in a couple weeks but will check on this.
- e. **Fire Training on FEMA Buyout Property.** There has been a plan for some time to allow the Northfield Fire Department (NFD) to perform fire training on one of the flood-damaged Water Street structures. Selectman Goslant is concerned that seeing the structure deliberately torched might be upsetting to neighbors already traumatized by Tropical Storm Irene and its aftermath. Manager Schulz is confident that the NFD will take all precautions so that all the residents are informed and well prepared in advance of the event.

**X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT.** Manager Schulz had nothing to add to his written report.

**XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED).** There was none.

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a personnel matter with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:30 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:45 p.m. No action was taken.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Doney, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to adjourn. **Motion passed 4-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kenneth L. McCann*

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of April 28, 2015.